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REPORT TO CONSUMERS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE •

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FOOD SHOPPING BEHAVIOR

How It's Done. An analysis of data from a consumer survey conducted in 1976 by USDA's Economic Research Service has identified three basic profiles of food shoppers. Some 1,100 shoppers were interviewed with some interesting results. Which is your profile?

The largest group (39 percent of those questioned) is characterized by a general satisfaction with the entire process of buying and preparing food: Buying favorite brands although they cost more; a general liking for food shopping activities and experimenting with new or different food products and recipes because of sensory appeal; spending more time in food preparation simply because they enjoy it.

The second largest group (32 percent) is primarily concerned with the efficient use of time and money: They feel that food shopping is a necessary but not particularly enjoyable chore; spend a minimum of time and effort in shopping; operate within a budget and buy extra quantities of food at lower prices to save time and money; generally use price as the dominant factor for purchases.

The third group (18 percent) earns the image of careful shopper by planning menus in advance; making out shopping lists; taking advantage of advertised specials; comparing prices between brands; considering nutritional labeling, food additives and preservations in making selections.

Or perhaps you are with the remaining 11 percent of the people interviewed who did not fit clearly into any of the three groups.

CONSUMER CREDIT

Charge! In April 1977, total consumer credit outstanding reached \$182 billion, mostly owed on automobiles and personal loans. Unsurprisingly, one of the fastest growing areas of consumer debt is bank credit cards--nearly \$14 billion was owed in April.



USDA PUBLISHES INFORMATION

Take A Look. When the U.S. Department of Agriculture was established by Congress in 1862, it was charged ". . . to diffuse among the people in the United States useful information on subjects connected with agriculture in the most general and comprehensive sense of that word. . ." USDA took Congress at its word. Below is a sampling of some of the information USDA is currently diffusing. Single free copies of all of the booklets are available by writing to: Publications Office, Office of Governmental and Public Affairs, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. Help yourself.

For Gardeners (no matter what it's doing outside, spring is coming)

Pruning Shade Trees and Repairing Their Injuries (G-83)
Selecting Fertilizers for Lawns and Gardens (G-89)
Growing Flowering Annuals (G-91)
Growing Azaleas and Rhododendrons (G-71)
Growing Chrysanthemums (G-65)
Growing Iris (G-66)

For Gardeners (until spring arrives)

Selecting and Growing House Plants (G-82)
Controlling Household Pests (G-96)

TAKE A WALK

Long, Long Trails A-Winding. USDA's Forest Service recently took a look down the road and proposed a program that will bring joy to the hearts and feet of hikers, backpackers, strollers and other forest-loving pedestrians. The proposed program will set up activities to increase and improve the National Trail System. The goal of the Forest Service is to increase the present 97,000 miles of trails on national forest lands to 120,000 miles by the year 2020, making sure the trails are of high quality, do not degrade the environment, and meet the outdoor recreation needs of present and future users. For those of us who may not be able to take advantage of the trails in 2020, a more immediate plan will be of greater interest: The designation of two National Recreation Trails on each of the 154 national forests by 1980. To date, 10 National Recreation Trails have been designated on national forest lands with seven others to be designated shortly. Several other proposals are in the mill, too: Construction and reconstruction of national forest segments of the Appalachian Scenic Trail and the Pacific Crest Scenic Trail and acquisition of the remaining privately-owned land within the national forest segments of each of these trails; cooperation with the Department of the Interior to complete by 1981 the study of all 22 National Scenic Trails designated by Congress; development of 20,000 miles of trails near population centers by 1985; and development of a bicycle-way by 1981 near a major population center to serve as a model for other bicycle-ways in the national forest system.

SERVICE is a monthly newsletter of consumer interest. It is designed for those who report to the individual consumer rather than for mass distribution. For information about items in this issue, write Lillie Vincent, Editor of Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of Governmental and Public Affairs, Special Reports Division, Room 459-A, Washington, DC 20250, or Telephone 202-447-5437.
